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Media Contact:

Jennifer Wagner, 317-232-1292

Nikki Edgar, 317-232-1287

Lucy Swalls, 317-695-0955 (on-site contact)

**Youth Summit participants recommend
tougher seat belt law, random drug testing**

LEBANON – More than 300 teens from across the state called upon members of the General Assembly today to close the pickup truck loophole in Indiana's seat belt law, to require self-defense as part of the state's physical education curriculum and to pass legislation requiring random drug testing of students and staff in Indiana public high schools.

As participants in the ninth annual Youth Summit, hosted by the Youth Division of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, the students spent the last three days meeting in small groups, hearing from experts and formulating their recommendations for a better, safer Indiana.

The premise of this year's summit, "Taking a Strike at Changing Indiana Communities," was designed to empower students and to help them realize that their actions and ideas can change the policies and attitudes that drive Indiana from the grassroots level.

Youth Summit provides a forum for teens to come together and talk about issues that directly affect youth, including drugs, alcohol, tobacco, traffic safety and public safety.

"These students are dedicated to sharing their perspective with Hoosiers across the state," said Jerry McCory, deputy director of programs for the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute.

"If we help these teens find their voices today, they will become our best hope for a brighter, more aware tomorrow," McCory said.

This year's Youth Summit legislative recommendations are:

1. Amend the Indiana seat belt law to apply to all passengers in all vehicles. The proposed law, which did not pass during the 2004 session of the Indiana General Assembly, would apply both to pickup trucks and to back-seat passengers in all vehicles.
2. Implement self-defense as a required unit of Indiana physical education classes in order to better educate and prepare youth to handle threatening or abusive situations.
3. Pass legislation requiring random drug testing of all students and staff in Indiana public schools.

The Indiana Criminal Justice Institute serves as the state's planning agency for criminal justice, juvenile justice, traffic safety, and victim services. The Institute develops long-range strategies for the effective administration of Indiana's criminal and juvenile justice systems and administers federal and state funds to carry out these strategies.

For more information about Youth Summit or the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, please visit us on the Web at www.in.gov/cji.